

Miami 1960

Year	Total Population	Black	Hispanic Origin	Non Hispanic White & Others	Percent Black
1960	935,047	137,299	50,000	747,748	14.7

Population by Race and Hispanic Origin Miami-Dade County, Florida



Income: While specific median figures are not detailed in the text, reports indicate the era involved economic disparities between new suburban areas and the aging inner-city, which suffered from investment neglect. Some wages in the early 60s were around \$1.15 an hour.



Mix of Habitats: The demographic makeup changed dramatically, with over 800,000 Cubans arriving between 1959 and 1980, creating a significant Latin influence. The city remained, however, deeply segregated along racial lines with, for example, the Overtown area being historically Black and facing neglect.



Living Conditions: Many homes, especially in the early 60s, lacked air conditioning. It was a period marked by both rapid expansion in some areas and deterioration in others.



In 1960, Miami was transforming rapidly, marked by a massive influx of Cuban refugees following the 1959 revolution, which reshaped the city's demographics and housing. The city was heavily segregated, with Black communities like Overtown heavily impacted by infrastructure projects. While downtown remained a business hub, the city faced suburban sprawl, economic divides, and, by the late 60s, a vibrant but tumultuous social scene.



Housing Standards: The 1960s saw a rise in "Little Havana" as Cubans settled in areas with older, cheaper housing, while suburbanization increased. However, this period also saw the destruction of Black communities (like Overtown) due to the construction of I-95, displacing thousands.



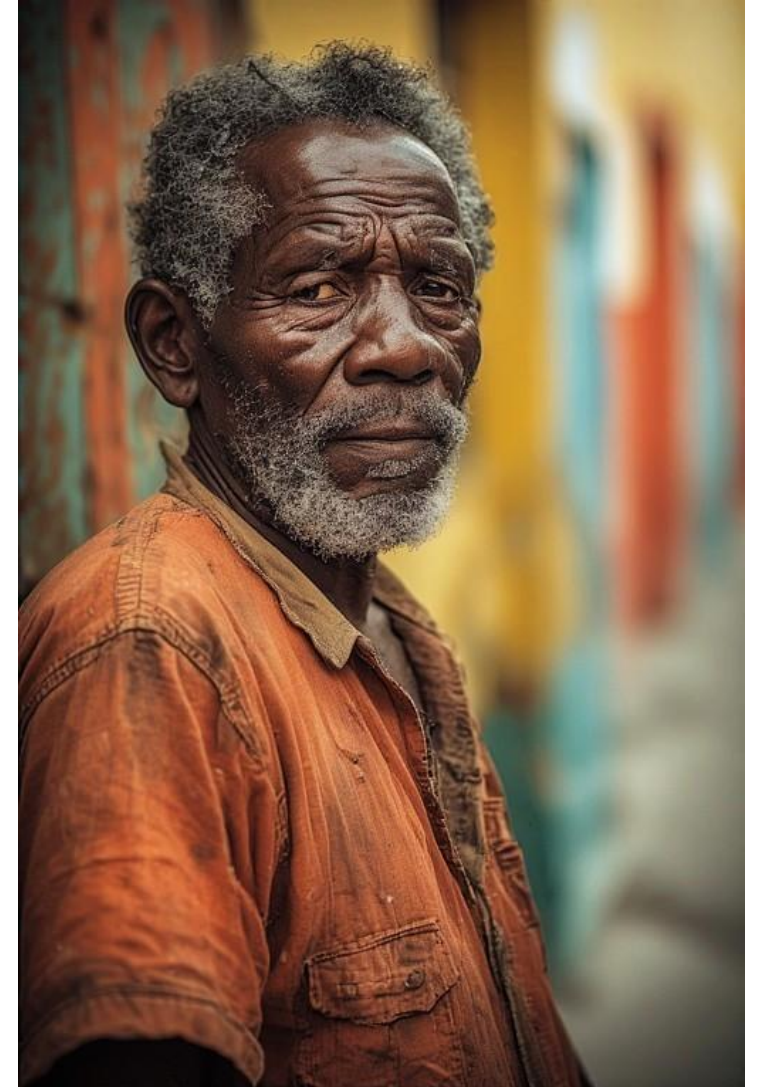
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Work Opportunities: The economy was heavily reliant on tourism and service industries, with some areas experiencing decline as businesses moved to suburbs. The influx of Cuban refugees led to a new labor pool.



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Life and Crime: Life in the 60s was characterized by a "simpler time" for some, yet it was also a period of major social change, including the civil rights movement and, by the late 60s, a "hippie" culture that brought issues with public space usage and minor crime.



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The Lincoln Road Mall was built in Miami Beach. Lincoln Road business owners felt threatened by the trend towards building large tourist hotels with their own selection of upscale shops, such as the Fontainebleau, that were blocks away from Lincoln Road. They taxed themselves in order to raise the necessary funds for a large revitalization project. Morris Lapidus, designer of the Fontainebleau and other Miami Beach hotels, was hired for the project. Soon, the Lincoln Road Mall became one of the most significant arena for Modernist architecture in Miami Beach.



In the late 1960s, long-haired, beaded and tie-dyed flower children brought their drugs, incense, guitars and peace symbols to South Florida.

Hippies had finally reached Miami. Coconut Grove, known for its laid-back attitude, became the gathering place for the counterculture movement.

On any given day one could find hippies smoking pot in the park, exploring Indian religion at the Yoga Temple on Mary Street or listening to the Lovin' Spoonful at the Gaslight on Grand Avenue.



1960s Miami fashion blended early-decade resort sophistication with later, vibrant youth-driven trends, prioritizing lightweight fabrics, bright tropical colors, and stylish, comfortable silhouettes suited for a coastal lifestyle. Key trends included shift dresses, swimwear with bold patterns, pastel-colored tailored suits, and, by the late 60s, bohemian styles and vibrant polyester prints.



Resort & Swimwear: Miami was a hub for resort wear, featuring high-fashion swimsuits, bikinis, and cover-ups that reflected a relaxing, sun-soaked lifestyle.

Daytime Chic: Early 60s saw structured shift dresses, while later in the decade, casual cotton blouses, Bermuda shorts, and patterned sun dresses became popular.

Youth Culture: As the decade progressed, Miami embraced the Mod trend, featuring shorter hemlines and bolder geometric prints, influenced by broader 1960s trends.

Patterns & Materials: Popular designs included paisley, polka dots, floral prints, and tie-dye, often on synthetic, easy-care fabrics like polyester, rayon, and spandex.

Accessories: Oversized sunglasses, straw handbags, and sandals were essential for the sunny Miami aesthetic.



1960s Miami house style was dominated by MiMo (Miami Modern) and Florida Ranch architecture, emphasizing indoor-outdoor living, geometric shapes, and tropical optimism. Characterized by flat roofs, terrazzo floors, breeze blocks, and floor-to-ceiling glass, these homes blended playful, space-age, and glamorous elements with functional, breezy layouts suited for the climate.



Key Features of 1960s Miami Homes:

MiMo Elements: Whimsical designs including cantilevered rooflines, boomerang shapes, "cheese hole" walls (breeze blocks), and acute angles.

Indoor-Outdoor Flow: Large sliding glass doors, screen-enclosed patios, and "Florida Rooms" were common to encourage natural breezes.

Structural Details: Terrazzo flooring, low-slung, horizontal silhouettes, and bean-pole columns.

Materials & Decor: Natural stone accents, bold, bright colors, and often, kidney-shaped swimming pools.

Architecture & Function: Homes often featured modest, one-story Ranch layouts or apartment styles that maximized efficiency, while high-end designs featured sweeping, dramatic lines.



Prostitution in 1960s Miami was part of a broader, often illicit, vice landscape, with the city serving as a major hub for tourism and rapid development. While specific, localized data for 1960s Miami is limited, the era saw widespread, yet illegal, street and hotel-based sex work. Prostitution in the US was largely prohibited during this period, despite changing social norms.

Legal Landscape: Prostitution was illegal across the US, with local laws bolstered by the Mann Act (1910), which prohibited interstate transport for "immoral purposes".

Social and Legal Changes: The 1960s marked a shift in sex work, with the introduction of the oral contraceptive pill in 1960.

Brothels and Vice: While often operating in the shadows, illicit sexual services were often tied to the broader, often corrupt, vice scene in many American cities during the mid-20th century, where prostitution was frequently linked to organized crime or local, sometimes corrupt, officials.



In the 1960s, Miami was a vibrant hub for celebrities, musicians, and sports figures, with icons like Muhammad Ali residing in the area. Following his 1960 Olympic win, Ali (then Cassius Clay) lived on NW 46th Street, training in the city. Other notable figures frequenting or living in the area included The Beatles, who stayed at the Deauville Hotel in 1964.

Muhammad Ali: Lived in a home on NW 46th Street and Northwest 15th Court, training in Miami in the early 1960s.

The Beatles: Stayed at the Deauville Hotel in 1964, broadcasting their second Ed Sullivan show from there.

Jackie Gleason: Produced his popular variety show from Miami Beach during this era, significantly boosting the city's profile.

Joe Robbie & Danny Thomas: Principals behind the NFL franchise awarded to Miami in 1965.

The Grateful Dead: Performed at the 1968 "love-in" at Greynolds Park, which was a popular, non-traditional hangout during that era.

The 1960s also saw the rise of the Cuban community and the beginning of Miami's development as a major cultural center, with the first Coconut Grove Art Festival occurring in 1964.



In the 1960s, Miami became a significant sports hub, anchored by the 1965 founding of the AFL's Miami Dolphins by Joe Robbie and Danny Thomas. Key figures included early Dolphins players like running back Joe Auer (1964–1968) and Miami Hurricanes football players Eddie Johns and Jim Vollenweider. The city was also a major hub for boxing with legends like Muhammad Ali training in the area.

Joe Robbie & Danny Thomas: Founders and owners of the Miami Dolphins franchise, which began play in 1966.

Joe Auer: Running back for the Miami Dolphins (1964–1968), a key player in the team's inaugural years.

Miami Hurricanes Football: Prominent players during this era included QB Eddie Johns, RB Jim Vollenweider, and QB Bobby Weaver (1960 roster).

Boxing Scene: Miami was a premier boxing destination where icons like Muhammad Ali, Sonny Liston, and Floyd Patterson trained and fought.

Development: The 1960s marked the growth of sports entertainment in the area, setting the stage for future expansion into baseball and hockey in later decades.



In the 1960s, Miami was a hub for organized crime, heavily influenced by traditional Italian-American Mafia families (Gambino, Trafficante) and emerging criminal entities. Key figures and groups included The Corporation (a powerful Cuban mafia), the Dixie Mafia, and various smuggling networks that preceded the 1970s cocaine boom.

Italian-American Mafia: Various families operated in or held influence over Miami, including the Trafficante crime family (based in Tampa but active in Miami), along with the Gambino, Bonanno, Colombo, Genovese, and Lucchese families.

The Corporation: An organized crime group comprised largely of Cuban-Americans, often referred to as the "Cuban Mafia".

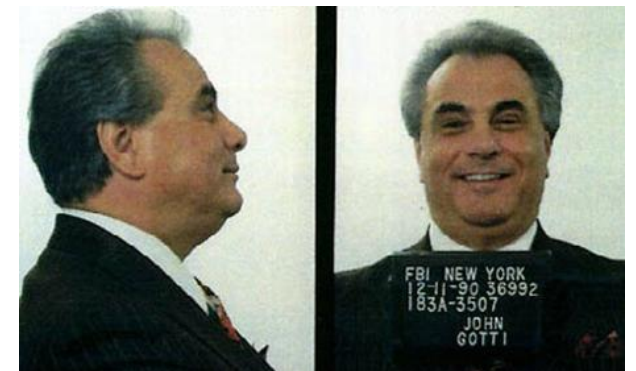
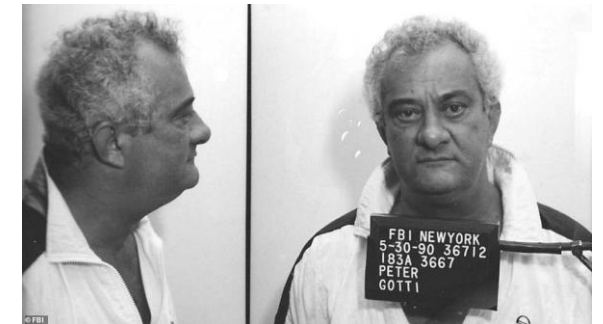
Drug Smuggling Networks: Early smuggling networks began forming in this era, involving figures who later became notorious in the drug trade.

Anti-Castro Militant Groups: Groups such as the MIRR (Movimiento Insurreccional de Recuperacion Revolucionaria) were active in the 1960s, involving themselves in paramilitary activities and sometimes illegal acts, according to FBI historical reports.

The Dixie Mafia: A loosely organized group of criminals operating across the South, with presence in Florida.

1960s Criminal Activity:

FBI records from the 1960s show the Miami division was heavily occupied with investigations into fraud, extortion, illegal gambling, and racketeering. This era served as a precursor to the massive drug trafficking organizations that would define Miami in the subsequent decade.



In the 1960s, Miami's film industry established itself as a legitimate production hub, driven by the creation of specialized infrastructure like Ivan Tors Studios, which produced Flipper. The era was defined by a mix of major television productions, such as The Jackie Gleason Show, and low-budget "Florida films" that utilized local, lurid settings for grindhouse cinema.

Production Infrastructure: Ivan Tors Studios (now Greenwich Studios) in North Miami was a primary hub, known for underwater filming capabilities. Other key components included Continental Film Labs and the Cinetech camera rental house.

"Florida Movies" (Exploitation Cinema): Many independently produced films were shot in the area, often characterized by low budgets, sex, and violence, including titles like She-Devils on Wheels and 2000 Maniacs.

Television Productions: The Jackie Gleason Show moved to Miami Beach in 1964, bringing prestige and consistent work to the local industry. Other notable productions included the aquatic adventure series Sea Hunt.

Key Locations & Features: Popular, iconic locations included the Fontainebleau Hotel, Coconut Grove, and Pier 5.

Cultural Shifts: The industry was influenced by the rise of beach culture, with many scenes shot at local drive-ins like the Tropicaire.

The 1960s helped Miami transition from a mere backdrop to a functional, "Hollywood-on-the-Atlantic" production center.



In the 1960s, Miami's industrial sector was characterized by small-to-medium-sized manufacturing plants focusing on local needs and specialized goods, rather than heavy manufacturing. Major industrial sectors included concrete and lumber products, food processing (meat packing, bottling), garment manufacturing, printing, and boat building.

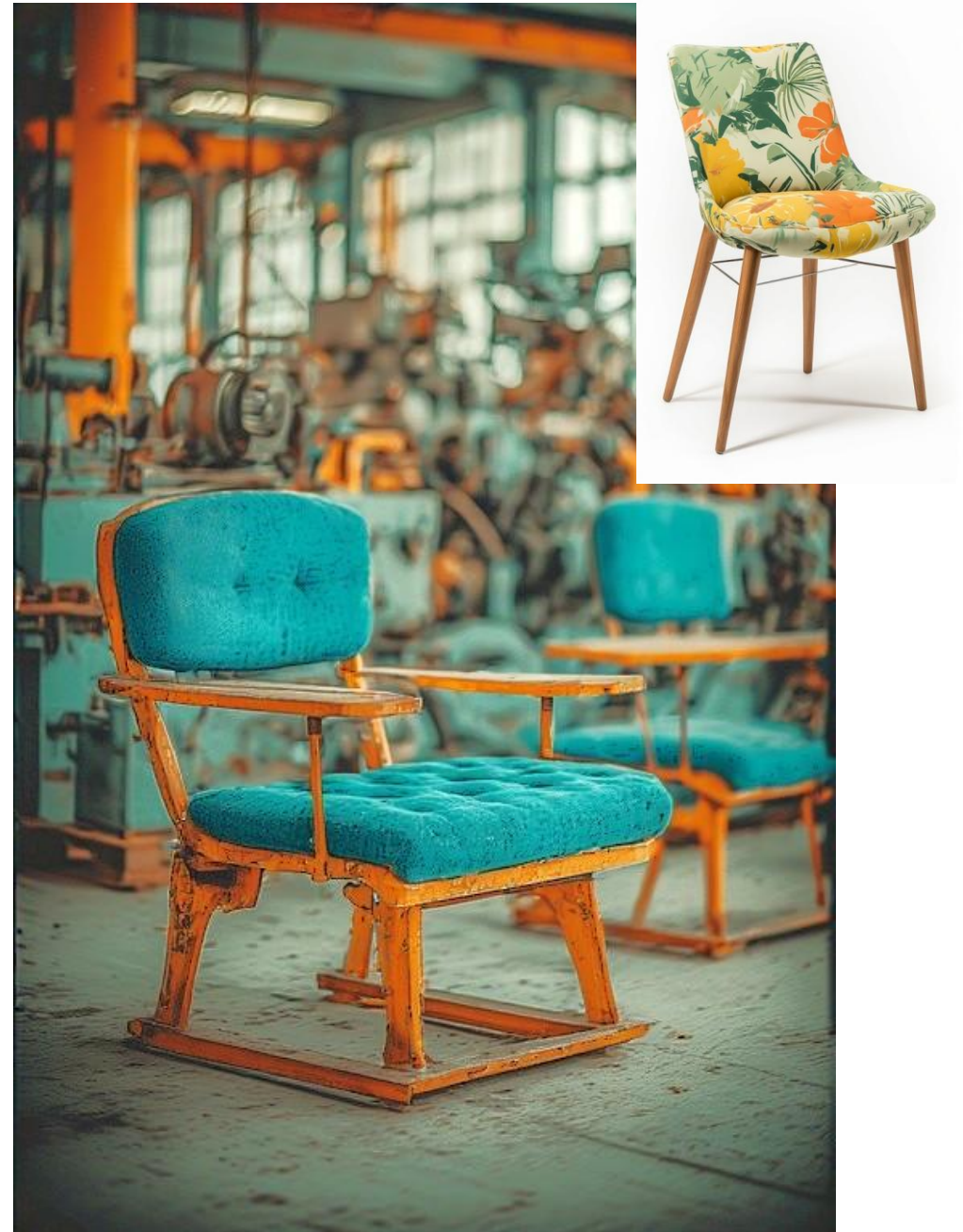
Construction & Materials: Production of concrete, stone, clay, and lumber products to support rapid population growth.

Manufacturing: Light manufacturing plants focused on home furnishings, clothing/apparel, and specialized fishing/sports equipment.

Food Processing: Significant local industry involving meat packing, bread baking, and bottled beverages.

Marine & Transport: Small-scale boat building and metal fabrication.

While Miami's economy was rapidly expanding, its industrial base was diverse and tailored to regional consumption and construction rather than heavy industry, setting the stage for its later evolution as a international logistics hub.



The Rise of Mass Tourism

Infrastructure Growth: The completion of approximately 681 miles of Interstate highway in Florida during the 1960s allowed nearly 80% of vacationers to arrive by automobile.

Jet Travel: The 1960s saw a shift as air travel became cheaper and faster, with jet service allowing tourists to arrive en masse at Miami International Airport.

Year-Round Industry: The widespread adoption of air conditioning and the growth of the convention business allowed hotels to operate throughout the summer, ending the city's status as a seasonal-only resort.

Architecture and Iconic Destinations

"Big Room" Hotels: Miami Beach was dominated by glamorous, large-scale hotels such as the Fontainebleau, Eden Roc, Deauville, and Carillon.

Sunny Isles "Motel City": Further north along Collins Avenue, a "resort motel city" emerged in Sunny Isles, featuring distinctive neon signs and tropical themes at motels like the Thunderbird and Sahara.

Lincoln Road Mall: In 1960, the Lincoln Road Mall was revitalized by architect Morris Lapidus, becoming a significant site for Modernist architecture.

Family Attractions: The Miami Seaquarium (opened in 1955) peaked in popularity during the 1960s as a national draw for families.



In the 1960s, Miami's cruising industry began its transformation into the "Cruise Capital of the World," with Eastern Steamship Lines leading the way with the Bahama Star. Key operators included early, smaller vessels and pioneers like Norwegian Caribbean Line (founded 1966) and the precursor to Royal Caribbean (1968).

Eastern Steamship Lines: Operated the Bahama Star (previously the Borinquen), which provided regular service to Nassau.

Norwegian Caribbean Line (NCL): Founded in 1966, it revolutionized the industry by offering affordable, fun cruises to the Bahamas.

Royal Caribbean Cruise Line: Founded in 1968, marking the start of its,, Song of Norway, Nordic Prince, and Sun Viking ships.

Other Notable Vessels: Early, smaller vessels operating in the 1960s included the Ariadne, Boheme, Cabo Izarra, Flavia, Freeport, Jamaica Queen, Starward, and Sunward.

Early Operations: Princess Cruises began its operation in 1965.

These ships typically operated shorter, 3- to 4-day cruises to the Bahamas and Caribbean.



In the 1960s, Miami's road landscape underwent a massive transformation, shifting from local street-centered travel to a city defined by major interstate highways and modernized pedestrian spaces.

Major Thoroughfares and Urban Growth

The decade was defined by the construction of massive interstate systems that reshaped the city's geography.

Interstate 95 (I-95): Begun in the late 1950s and continuing through the 60s, I-95's construction carved through established neighborhoods, most notably Overtown, displacing thousands of residents.

Palmetto Expressway (SR 826): Originally completed in 1961, it served as a vital bypass for the growing western suburbs.

Airport Expressway (SR 112): Opened in December 1961 (originally the 36th Street Tollway), it connected the city to the airport with a then-10 cent toll.

Iconic Street Scenes

Lincoln Road Mall: In 1960, this famous Miami Beach street was closed to cars and transformed into a pedestrian mall designed by Morris Lapidus, featuring mid-century modern gazebos and fountains.

Collins Avenue: Remained the primary artery for "Motel Row," lined with neon-lit hotels and palm trees, serving as the main route for tourists and luxury travelers.

Calle Ocho (SW 8th Street): In the 1960s, this area became the cultural heart of the growing Cuban exile community, developing into the vibrant thoroughfare known today.













Driving Culture

The 1960s were characterized by heavy traffic of vintage American cars and buses. Local "car agencies" on Fifth Street often hired drivers to deliver vehicles between Miami and the North, providing a tank of gas for the trip. Modern infrastructure like the MacArthur Causeway and various bridges over the Intracoastal Waterway provided the classic scenic views of the growing Miami skyline.





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